

II. History and Character

A. Neighborhood History

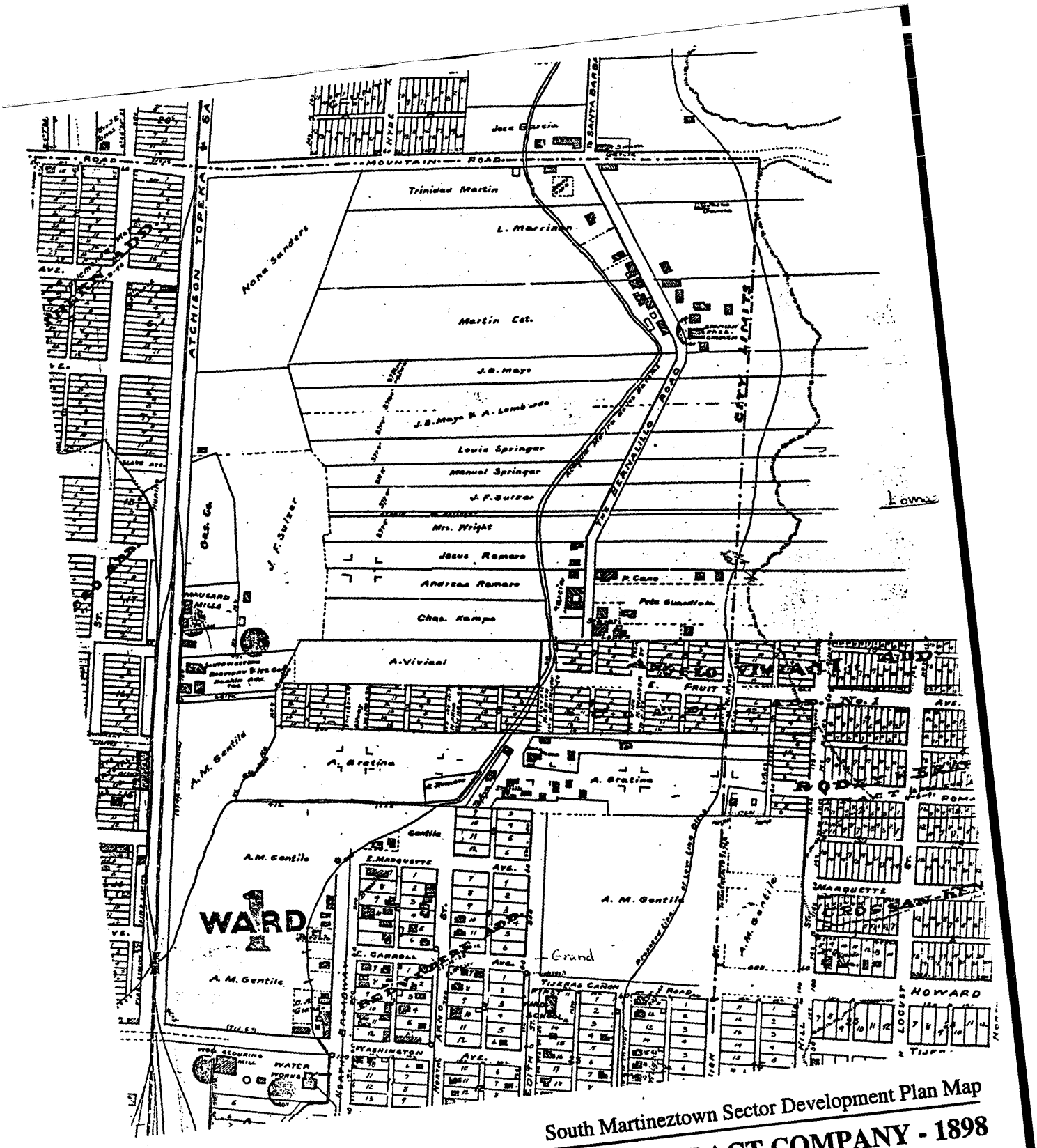
1. Setting

South Martineztown is located along the sand hills just east of downtown Albuquerque. It is a small, compact neighborhood surrounded by urban development. The most prominent feature in the area is the St. Joseph Medical Center which forms the eastern border of the neighborhood. The medical center campus, with its mix of high and mid-rise buildings and sprawling parking lots, is in stark contrast to the compact residential neighborhood. The remaining three sides of the neighborhood are bordered by major arterial roadways, separating South Martineztown from adjacent neighborhoods and respective sector development plan areas.

Directly west of South Martineztown is an industrial area next to the railroad tracks. This area contains intensive office, warehousing and manufacturing uses. Separated from the residential neighborhood by Broadway Boulevard, this area is oriented to the industrial and shipping facilities of the railroad and the business activities of the downtown core.

To the south is the Huning Highland neighborhood, a railroad-era subdivision platted, developed and originally settled by Anglo Americans following the arrival of the Santa Fe Railway in Albuquerque in 1880. An Albuquerque Abstract Company map dated 1898 shows South Martineztown to be an area of transition from the uniformly platted lots of Huning Highland and the long, narrow and irregular platting common even today in the Santa Barbara-Martineztown neighborhood to the north. As shown by this 1898 map, land division to the north follows the typical pattern of Spanish agricultural lands with long parcels of varying widths running perpendicular to an acequia.

Historically, South Martineztown has been tied to the Spanish-settled neighborhoods of Santa Barbara and Martineztown to the north of Lomas Boulevard. Although often collectively referred to as Martineztown, the area includes three distinct neighborhoods. Santa Barbara is the northernmost, roughly the area from Mountain Road north to McKnight Road. This area has been closely tied to the development of the San Ignacio de Loyola Catholic Church. Martineztown, the oldest of the three sections, is located between Lomas and Mountain Road. Historically it was associated with the Second Presbyterian Church now located at the corner of Lomas and Edith Boulevards. Both Santa Barbara and Martineztown reflect their heritage as areas of agriculture, commerce and housing. Older homes are situated on irregularly-shaped lots along narrow streets.



North (6/95)

South Martineztown Sector Development Plan Map ALBUQUERQUE ABSTRACT COMPANY - 1898

This map shows platting patterns in Martineztown along with building and business locations.

Often, houses are located in close proximity to storage yards and industrial activities. In contrast, South Martineztown is a modern, planned neighborhood; it is designed and built to function as a residential enclave within the larger context of urban development. While retaining its sense of community, the neighborhood conveys an image quite different from the older neighborhoods of central Albuquerque. Although retaining social and historical ties with Santa Barbara-Martineztown, South Martineztown has chosen a very different path than its neighbors to the north.

2. History

First settlement of the Martineztown area occurred in the 1820s when a stop was established along the Bernalillo Road (now Edith Boulevard), a portion of El Camino Real or the King's Highway which stretched from Mexico City to Taos. At the time, this area along the sandhills was pasture land for sheep, goats and cattle used by the more prosperous Spanish families that lived in Old Albuquerque (Old Town).

Very little is known about the area until 1850 when Don Manuel Martin established a permanent settlement north of present day Lomas Boulevard along the recently completed Acequia Madre de los Barelás. Adobe and terron homes were built along the acequia in the vicinity of the present day intersection of Edith Boulevard and Mountain Road. The Martin family (which later changed their surname to Martinez) farmed irrigated land to the west of the acequia and continued to graze livestock along the sandhills. In the 1880s, the family converted to Protestantism; shortly thereafter the First Spanish Presbyterian Church was founded (1889) on Edith Boulevard between Mountain and Lomas. For some time the area was referred to as La Placita de los Protestantes.

For many decades Martineztown was little more than a small collection of adobe homes along the acequia. Most families were engaged in farming, with a few small business operations intermingled with residences. Following the arrival of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway in Albuquerque in 1880, industrial jobs became available. During the summer months many area residents were employed at the wool scouring mill that opened along the railroad tracks in 1895. The 1898 Albuquerque Abstract Company map shows a few groupings of houses within present day South Martineztown. This map also reveals the encroachment of the Anglo grid pattern of property division into the neighborhood. This map shows South Martineztown area within the Albuquerque City limits.

South Martineztown, known as Las Palomitas or Dog Town, grew slowly in the first decades of the century. Elders remember the area as very rural with only a small collection of houses surrounded by farming and grazing land. It is recalled with affection as an area where residents raised chickens and goats and shared generously with their neighbors. While growth was slow, important changes were occurring as Albuquerque expanded to accommodate a significant influx of new residents. The First Ward School was built in the 1890s between

Edith and Walter on the south side of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue. A particularly important development for South Martineztown was the establishment of St. Joseph's Sanitarium in 1902. By 1910, the population of Albuquerque was 11,020--a 40% increase in ten years. The Albuquerque City Directory listed 34 addresses in South Martineztown in 1920, a doubling of houses in ten years.

During the 1920s, South Martineztown grew rapidly, with listed addresses tripling in number to 93. Longfellow Elementary School was established on its current site and St. Joseph's Sanitarium became a Hospital. Electric and telephone service was extended to the neighborhood. The relative prosperity of Albuquerque attracted an influx of new residents into the city, including those who settled in Martineztown. (People came from towns and villages throughout northern New Mexico, including Madrid, Las Vegas, Raton, Cuba, Mountainaire and Tijeras. In 1924 Manuel Sanchez purchased the grocery store located at 601 Edith NE. At the time, the store consisted of a small building that faced the west, orienting to the Bernalillio Road which ran next to the acequia (west of the present alignment of Edith Boulevard). From 1925-27, the present day store was built using adobes made on site. The Sanchez family remembers other businesses in the area, including the Keystone Bar, Driggers Wood Yard, La Casa de Roma (a Way Station on the Camino Real), a nearby house of prostitution and several dance halls.

Over the years many businesses operated within the South Martineztown area. The following list (developed by neighborhood residents) provides insight into the richness of activities that have occurred within this small neighborhood.



Manuel's Market--a neighborhood landmark since 1927.

Businesses that have operated in South Martineztown

Business / Organization	Location	Years of operation
La Casa de Roma	Way Station on the Camino Real	up to 1910
Manuel's Market	Edith and Roma	from 1927 to present
Sanitary Laundry	Broadway and Lomas	1930s - 1970s
Viscovi Grocery Store	Marquette and Broadway	1930s
La Tienda del Indio	Marquette and Broadway	1930s & 40s
Ideal Hotel and Restaurant	Marquette	1930s & 40s
Carrillo Coal and Wood Co.	Roma and Arno	1930s & 40s
Chavez Grocery		
Standard Grocery	Broadway and Marquette	1940s & 50s
Standard Barbershop	Broadway and Marquette	1960s
Patrick Construction Co.	Arno and Marquette	1940s & 50s
Jill's Bakery	Edith and Roma (Manuel's Market)	1940s & 50s
Samco Printing Company	Broadway and Lomas	until urban renewal
Brenda B-B-que	Arno	1950s & 60s
God House Pentecostal Church	Arno and Grand	1950s & 60s
Blue Moon Cafe	Arno	1950s
Fred's Restaurant	Fruit between Arno and Broadway	1950s
New Mexico Transportation Co.	Arno and Roma	1960s & 70s

Through the 1930s and 40s, South Martineztown continued to grow and prosper. Albuquerque's economy and growth was fueled by federal depression-era programs and subsequently by military spending during and after the Second World War. Newcomers continued to settle in South Martineztown, which became more solidly Hispanic during this period, according to City Directory records. The Santa Barbara-Martineztown Community Center was built at 1320 Edith Boulevard with WPA funds. Also, city water and sewer lines were extended to the neighborhood—although many residents couldn't afford hook-up fees and continued to use wells and out buildings. Edith was paved and other neighborhood streets were completed (though not always paved). Commercial establishments multiplied on Broadway Boulevard and began encroaching into the residential area. Also, residential densities increased as multiple dwellings were built on single lots. South Martineztown had shifted from an area of rural character to an inner city neighborhood.

3. Government Plans

By the 1950s, City officials envisioned South Martineztown as an area appropriate for commercial expansion. Located next to the railroad tracks, the area appeared to be a logical site for industrial and warehouse use. This transition did not occur due to a number of factors, including a slowing in downtown expansion and a growing emphasis on trucking and away from rail freight. South Martineztown was also viewed as a viable location for civic and educational development. Although zoning was not legally adopted until 1959, the original

1954 Zoning Ordinance designated South Martineztown for commercial and high density residential activities (see the Zoning discussion). Early zoning designations appear to have accelerated neighborhood decline. With reason, some residents lost confidence that the neighborhood would remain residential. Also, there are reports that banks refused to finance residential loans for commercially zoned properties and that the City was refusing to issue residential building permits in the area. Whether true or not, it is documented that the City of Albuquerque began purchasing property in the vicinity of the Civic Auditorium which was completed in 1957 at the edge of the neighborhood. City plans labeled South Martineztown transitional, slating the area for a series of development projects including a City government complex, a convention center and finally an educational complex. General Obligation bonds for a new City Hall and subsequently a proposed convention center to be built in south Martineztown were rejected by voters. Nonetheless, plans for the area continued. An assessment of South Martineztown in the mid 1960s determined that deterioration was too severe to reverse and slated the area for redevelopment.

In the mid 1960s Albuquerque Public Schools selected South Martineztown as the site for a multiple-school educational park. Property was to be acquired by the Urban Renewal Agency. Although plans were scaled back to include only a new high school, contraction of the school as originally proposed would have required the demolition of much of the of the residential neighborhood. This is the point at which area citizens became involved.

4. Community Involvement

South Martineztown residents successfully resisted attempts to renovate the neighborhood with non-residential development during the late 1960s and 1970s. In 1971, the newly formed Citizens Information Committee of Martineztown organized a protest march on City Hall to demonstrate community dissatisfaction with government plans for the area. Going beyond protest, the neighborhood was proactive in developing their own alternative for the area. The neighborhood received assistance from a variety of organizations, particularly the Legal Aid Society of Albuquerque and the Design and Planning Assistance Center (DPAC) of the University of New Mexico's School of Architecture and Planning. With assistance from these organizations residents developed a detailed renewal plan for the neighborhood. The overall goal was to retain the area as a residential neighborhood. Following a series of neighborhood meetings and negotiations with the City and the Urban Renewal Agency, the essence of the neighborhood's plan was accepted. The neighborhood would be redeveloped but would remain residential. Existing residents were allowed to choose whether or not to remain in the neighborhood. Thirty-one families chose to have their homes rebuilt. Area renters were given first preference for apartments in the Martineztown Family public housing complex on Roma. Twenty-five households that had been renting in the neighborhood moved into the Roma complex. Through the 1970s, virtually the entire residential neighborhood was rebuilt, rebuilt in accordance with the wishes of area residents. In addition to new housing, a new

park was developed, streets were realigned and rebuilt and landscaping was installed. South Martineztown emerged as a vital neighborhood that had forged its own destiny.

The neighborhood was also successful in retaining Longfellow School. Declining enrollments through the sixties had convinced APS that Longfellow would be closed once the building had exceeded its useful life. With closure expected in the not-too-distant future, the Board of Education had assured St. Joseph Hospital officials that the Longfellow property would be available for hospital expansion. With this arrangement in mind, St. Joseph Hospital constructed a 12 million dollar, 245-bed facility in 1968 that faced west to the school, anticipating future availability of the Longfellow site for parking. Following discovery of structural problems with the building in 1979, Longfellow had to be closed. The student enrollment was only 130, half of the population the school had been built for in 1927. The neighborhood mobilized, convincing the Board of Education that Longfellow School should be rebuilt on the existing site, and that the school should become a model of innovation. Student test scores had been disturbingly low--and the neighborhood demanded action. Longfellow became Albuquerque's first magnet school after it was rebuilt and reopened in 1983. Special emphasis was given to Spanish language and the arts. Approximately half of the available spaces were opened to children outside of the school's regular geographic boundary.

The rebuilding of Longfellow created difficulties for St. Joseph Hospital. Denied use of the Longfellow site, St. Joseph Hospital was in a predicament by the mid 1970s. The growing medical complex had no room for expansion and parking was deficient. To address this need, the CICM requested that the City of Albuquerque sell the Civic

Auditorium property to St. Joseph Hospital for parking and future expansion. Subsequently, the City initiated the St. Joseph Hospital/Civic Auditorium Sector Development Plan which was adopted in 1979. This plan made the Civic Auditorium site and adjacent property (18 total acres) available for hospital expansion. The Civic Auditorium was demolished in 1986. Acquisition of this property provided land for the St. Joseph Healthcare System to implement plans for the Rehabilitation Hospital and Outpatient Center. This facility was completed in late 1988 on the bluff above High St. overlooking South Martineztown. The location and height of this project drew the ire of area residents who felt St. Joseph had not abided by agreed upon setbacks and that the building loomed prominently over the eastern portion of the neighborhood blocking views and light.

South Martineztown is a small neighborhood with a rich history. A sparse collection of houses and small businesses along the Camino Real in the 1920s, this area transformed into a compact and modern urban neighborhood in less than a half century. It has emerged from years of tremendous change (including total reconstruction during Urban Renewal) into a pleasant and cohesive neighborhood. Most remarkably, the residents of South Martineztown have succeeded in turning threats to the neighborhood's very existence into opportunities for positive change.

5. Timeline

- 1706 Villa of Alburquerque established
- 1820s First permanent settlement of Martineztown established as a stop on El Camino Real.
- 1850 Don Manuel Martin constructs a house of terrones along the Acequia Madre de los Barelas (present day Edith and Mountain) and moves his family to the site
- 1880 The Santa Fe Railroad arrives in Albuquerque, bringing Anglo migration, development of downtown and the new Huning Highland area just south of Martineztown
- 1889 1st Spanish Presbyterian Church established & UNM established
- 1890s First Ward School built on Grand Avenue between Walter and Edith
- 1895 Wool Scouring Mill opens along the Railway tracks
- 1902 St. Joseph Sanitarium established
- 1913 Construction began on San Ignacio de Loyola Church.
- 1916 San Ignacio dedicated
- 1926 San Ignacio given official status as a parish
- 1920s Electric and Telephone service is extended to Martineztown
- 1924 Manuel's Market opens
- 1927 Manuel's Market expansion completed at 601 Edith
- 1927 The original Longfellow Elementary School was built
- 1939 City water lines extended to Martineztown
- 1954 City's first zoning code adopted (but not legally established until 1959). South Martineztown zoned for high density residential and commercial activities.
- 1957 Civic Auditorium constructed for sporting, entertainment and public events.
- 1959 Bond election defeated for new City/County office building in South Martineztown.
- 1960 Interstate 25 built in the early 1960s
- 1960 City Planning Department Annual Report designates the projected land use for South Martineztown as totally "public."
- 1963 City of Albuquerque owns 5.1 acres in the neighborhood, excluding Civic Auditorium
- 1963 Bond election defeated for a proposed convention center to be tied to the Civic Auditorium.
- 1966 APS begins examining South Martineztown for an educational complex.
- 1968 St. Joseph's new hospital opened with 7 floors and 245 beds. The eighth and ninth floors were completed in 1971.
- 1971 Martineztown Community Plan developed by the Citizens Information Committee of Martineztown
- 1972 St. Joseph Medical Towers building was built.
- 1973 The major portion of neighborhood redevelopment occurred.
- 1973 Martineztown Park contracted.
- 1979 APS determined that Longfellow School is structurally unsound; area residents fought to keep the school in the neighborhood and helped design Longfellow's curriculum.
- 1979 St. Joseph/Civic Auditorium Area Sector Development Plan adopted.
- 1983 The new Longfellow School opened as a magnet school with emphasis on Spanish and the Arts. Half of the students are from the area neighborhoods, half from lthroughout the district.
- 1988 Southwest Pieta, by sculptor Luis Jimenez Jr., installed in Martineztown Park.
- 1988 St. Joseph Rehabilitation Hospital and Outpatient Center opened on the bluff of High St. overlooking South Martineztown.
- 1995 Grand Avenue renamed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue



Aerial view of South Martineztown, 1932, looking northward. Note the original Longfellow School and St. Joseph Hospital buildings.

6. Bibliography

The following bibliographic references provide information on the South Martineztown area. Documentation on several references is incomplete.

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9. **Recuerdos - Roots and Wings. Permanent Exhibit of Photographs from Santa Barbara/Martineztown at the Santa Barbara School, 1111 Edith NE.**
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B. Population Characteristics

The 1990 Census indicates that South Martineztown has a population of 428 people. Approximately 1/4 of the population is under 18 years old, and 1/4 is 65 years and older. This second figure is high compared to the citywide average of 11%. Given the number of senior housing units in South Martineztown, however, this number is not surprising. Over 2/3 of the population is of Hispanic origin. This compares to a citywide average of 34%, or slightly over 1/3. Other minority groups represent a very small portion of the population.

There were 201 households counted in the 1990 Census. Of these households, 92 were family households-- people related by birth or marriage living together. Almost half of the family households (43) were headed by single females--a rate more than double the citywide average. This statistic is often correlated with poverty. The average number of persons per household was 2.02, well below the citywide average of 2.46.

Of the 201 housing units in South Martineztown, 60 are owner occupied. This equals 30%. In Albuquerque, owner-occupancy levels are 57%, or nearly twice the level in South Martineztown. Unlike most neighborhoods within the center city area of Albuquerque, housing stock in South Martineztown is relatively new. The vast majority of units were built between 1970 and 1979, during the era of Urban Renewal.

Educational attainment is below city averages. Half of the population 25 years and older in South Martineztown has graduated from high school, 15% have a Bachelors Degree. Citywide averages are 84% and 28% respectively. While educational attainment levels are lower than citywide averages, a high proportion of adult residents have some college background and ten residents have a Graduate or Professional Degree.

Labor force information indicates that unemployment among area residents in 1989 was just under the citywide rate of 6.4%. The following industries were listed as the most common sectors of employment for South Martineztown residents: Health Services; Retail Trade; Communications/Public Utilities; Public Administration; Business and Repair Services; Educational Services; Manufacturing of Durable Goods.

In 1989, the Census estimated that 180 area residents lived below federally-established poverty levels. Among this number, 63 were under 18 years old.